Mr. Paul Daniel, M. A., L. T., (*Native Christian Association, South Travancore*) observed that religious toleration and freedom of conscience were the characteristics of all constitutional governments and these were seriously affected by the existing law which debarred Hindu converts to Christianity from enjoying their natural rights over property.

Mr. Warkey John (*Travancore and Cochin Roman Catholic Association, Kottayam*) supported the views of the previous speakers.

Reply.—Interference in matters relating to the law of inheritance is beset with numerous difficulties and it does not therefore seem expedient to Government to undertake legislation in the present circumstances of the country. This decision was arrived at by Government so long ago as 1898 after much discussion and consideration.

77. Necessity for framing a law of inheritance for Native Christians.

Mr. C. P. Thomas, B. A., L. T.,(*Travancore and Cochin Christian Association, Kottayam*) said that the present condition of the law of inheritance applicable to the Christian community in Travancore was of the most unsettled kind, and it was high time that steps were taken to place it on a sound and permanent basis. The High Court in some of their recent judgments had called pointed attention to the unsatisfactory state of this branch of the law at present and observed that legislation was necessary. Some of the judges were following what they considered were the practices sanctioned by customary law or ecclesiastical authority. Their opinions depended on those of the witnesses examined before them which, it must be said, varied with the character of the persons. Others were adopting the provisions of the Indian Succession Act, but it was clear that that piece of legislation was not framed to suit the Christians of Travancore, but was influenced by practices obtaining in other Christian communities having different traditions and living under different conditions. Individual action in the matter was not therefore likely to meet with general approval and acceptance. He therefore requested that a commission might be appointed to enquire into and report on the various customs obtaining in the several localities of the State and among the several sections of the community.

Mr. Warkey John (*Travancore and Cochin Roman Catholic Association, Kottayam*) *and Mr. Kesavan Padmanabhan* (*Mavelikara*) also spoke on the subject.

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Mr. G. Idichandy, B. A., Bar-at-Law (*Mavelikara*) remarked that the want of a codified law of inheritance was a great impediment to the progress of the Native Christian community. Many suits were being every day launched in courts and large sums of money wasted on them. He too requested that a commission of experienced and enlightened members from among the Christian community might be appointed to investigate and collect the customary law on the subject and submit a report to Government and that public opinion might then be invited thereon and a law passed conducive to the material advancement of the Christian community of the State.

Reply.—Considering the diversity in the general law applicable to all Christians, no legislation can be effected satisfying the interests of the entire Christian community. Each section of Christians seems to have its own customary law modifying the general principles of the canon law. But if particular communities desiring legislation come forward with definite proposals before the Legislative Council, the matter will be considered and a commission appointed if deemed necessary.

78. Introduction of certain changes in the present Marumakkathayam law and procedure.

Mr. P. Kesava Pillai, B. A., B. L., (*Quilon*) suggested the desirability of introducing the following changes in the Marumakkathayam law and procedure :—

(*a*) With regard to sale of tarawad properties, the present rule is that the consent of junior members may be proved orally. This should be changed and provision made for such consent being evidenced by a registered instrument, whenever the sale itself is evidenced by such instrument.

(*b*) Mortgages of tarawad properties should be placed on the same footing as sales, so far as the consent of junior members is concerned.

(*c*) The present law regarding tarawad property was that on the one hand it could be sold in execution of a decree against the Karnavan, and, on the other, it could be set aside by the junior members by a regular suit. This led to multiplicity of suits. It would be desirable to exempt tarawad property from liability to sale in court auctions except under decrees to which all the adult members of the tarawad were parties at the date of suit.

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